

## RETAIL PRICES - MARCH QUARTER, 1953.

## All Items - "C" Series.

"C" Series index numbers of retail prices of all items (with the weighted average of the six capital cities in 1925-1927 as base of 1,000) were as shown below.

## "C" Series Retail Price Index Numbers and Percentage Increases, March Quarter, 1953.

City.	Index Number.	Increase from Year Ended June, 1939.	Increase from March Quarter, 1952.	Increase from December Quarter, 1952.
Brisbane ..	2,105	143.9	4.9	0.8
Toowoomba ..	2,126	149.8	5.1	0.8
Rockhampton ..	2,139	148.4	5.2	0.5
Townsville ..	2,215	142.9	6.4	1.0
Bundaberg ..	2,104	150.2	4.8	0.9
Warwick ..	2,114	157.2	6.0	0.6

The "C" Series retail price index number for Queensland (weighted average of "five towns"), after remaining practically unchanged in the previous quarter, showed a small rise in the March quarter of 1953. It increased from 2,100 to 2,116, a rise of 0.8 per cent. All six cities for which the index is available recorded increases, the smallest being 0.5 per cent. in Rockhampton, and the largest 1.0 per cent. in Townsville. In Brisbane, a rise of 0.8 per cent. followed a slight decrease in the December quarter, and in four of the other five cities the rise in the recent quarter was greater than in the December quarter. Otherwise the increases were the smallest since the middle of 1947, when the rapid inflation of prices commenced, except in one or two isolated cases due to temporary local eccentricities of prices in particular cities.

In all the cities, the increase in the latest quarter was almost all due to higher prices of food and groceries, the increases varying from 1.2 per cent. in Warwick to 2.0 per cent. in Bundaberg. Four of the cities showed slight falls and two slight rises in clothing and footwear prices, but in none was the variation more than 0.4 per cent. Miscellaneous items rose by 1.0 per cent. in Townsville and there were smaller rises in the other cities. House rents increased slightly in Brisbane, Townsville, and Toowoomba.

The latest increase made the rise in the index for Brisbane 4.9 per cent. for the twelve months ended March, 1953. This was the smallest rise over a period of twelve months since the year ended December, 1947, when it was 4.8 per cent. The peak of inflation was reached in the year ended December, 1951, with a rise of 25.1 per cent.

Percentage changes during the last quarter and since 1938-39 in food and groceries, clothing and footwear, and miscellaneous items are shown in the following table.

Retail Prices, Percentage Increases<sup>a</sup>, March Quarter, 1953.

City.	Food and Groceries.		Clothing and Footwear.		Miscellaneous Items.	
	From Year Ended June, 1939.	From Dec. Quarter, 1952.	From Year Ended June, 1939.	From Dec. Quarter, 1952.	From Year Ended June, 1939.	From Dec. Quarter, 1952.
Brisbane ..	175.8	1.7	271.9	-0.2	100.1	0.3
Toowoomba ..	194.3	1.5	272.9	0.2	99.6	0.4
Rockhampton ..	170.3	1.5	268.5	-0.4	107.8	0.4
Townsville ..	167.3	1.9	267.9	-0.2	108.9	1.0
Bundaberg ..	169.1	2.0	275.3	-0.1	99.1	0.4
Warwick ..	186.4	1.2	275.9	0.2	101.7	0.2

<sup>a</sup> Minus (-) indicates decrease.

Food and Groceries.

During the recent quarter, the food and groceries index numbers increased for the six Queensland cities for which data are collected. The principal variations recorded were increases in the prices of potatoes, onions, bread, and flour, and decreased prices for meat, bacon, and milk.

Rent (4 and 5 Roomed Houses).

The rent index remained stationary during the quarter in Rockhampton, Bundaberg, and Warwick, but increased in Brisbane, Toowoomba, and Townsville by 0.5 per cent., 0.3 per cent., and 0.4 per cent. respectively.

Clothing and Footwear.

The clothing and footwear index numbers increased in Toowoomba and Warwick, but decreased in the other four cities covered by the survey. The decrease in Brisbane was the first decrease recorded for the prices of these items since the first quarter of 1947, apart from an extraordinary fall in the first quarter of 1949 caused by the reduction of retailers' margins of profit.

Miscellaneous Items.

The increase of 0.3 per cent. in the miscellaneous items index for Brisbane was the lowest quarterly increase since the first quarter of 1948. The relatively larger increase in this index for Townsville was due mainly to higher charges for firewood.

Comparison of Costs in Queensland Cities.

The following table shows the amounts, for the various Queensland cities, required in March quarter, 1953, to purchase the quantity of goods or housing which would have cost £1 in Brisbane.

Amounts Required in Various Cities to Purchase Equivalent of £1 in Brisbane.

City.	All Items.			Food and Groceries.			Rent (4 and 5 Rooms).			Clothing and Footwear.			Miscellaneous Items.		
	£	s.	d.	£	s.	d.	£	s.	d.	£	s.	d.	£	s.	d.
Brisbane ..	1	0	0	1	0	0	1	0	0	1	0	0	1	0	0
Toowoomba ..	1	0	2 $\frac{1}{2}$	1	0	3 $\frac{1}{2}$	19	8		1	0	0 $\frac{1}{2}$	1	0	7 $\frac{1}{2}$
Rockhampton ..	1	0	4	1	0	6	18	10 $\frac{1}{4}$		1	0	2 $\frac{1}{2}$	1	1	1 $\frac{1}{4}$
Townsville ..	1	1	0 $\frac{1}{2}$	1	1	7 $\frac{1}{2}$	1	0	6 $\frac{1}{2}$	1	0	0 $\frac{1}{2}$	1	1	10 $\frac{3}{4}$
Bundaberg ..	1	0	0	1	0	7	15	3 $\frac{1}{2}$		1	0	5 $\frac{1}{4}$	1	0	8 $\frac{3}{4}$
Warwick ..	1	0	1	1	0	6 $\frac{1}{4}$	16	6 $\frac{1}{2}$		1	0	1 $\frac{1}{2}$	1	1	3

During March quarter, 1953, the cost of all items together in the five provincial cities for which the index numbers are calculated retained almost the same relativity to Brisbane prices as in the previous quarter. Small increases in the amounts required in the various cities to purchase goods costing £1 in Brisbane occurred in Townsville ( $\frac{1}{2}$ d.) and Bundaberg ( $\frac{1}{4}$ d.), while a decrease of  $\frac{1}{2}$ d. occurred in both Rockhampton and Warwick. There was no change in the relation between Toowoomba and Brisbane. Townsville, which has the highest living costs of the six selected Queensland cities, increased its excess over Brisbane from 1s. 0d. to 1s. 0 $\frac{1}{2}$ d. in the £. Bundaberg's prices having moved into equality with those of Brisbane, there remained none of the five selected provincial cities with lower prices than those of the metropolis.

For food and groceries, all five provincial cities had substantially higher prices than Brisbane, the smallest excess being 3 $\frac{1}{2}$ d. in the £ in Toowoomba. During the quarter, Bundaberg and Townsville food prices rose in relation to those in Brisbane, while in Warwick, Toowoomba, and Rockhampton they fell a little.

Clothing and footwear prices were higher in all provincial cities than in Brisbane, but this section of the regimen shows less variation throughout the State than any other section. Toowoomba clothing and footwear prices, which were  $\frac{1}{4}$ d. in the £ below Brisbane prices in the previous quarter, increased to  $\frac{1}{2}$ d. above, and Townsville prices were similarly close to Brisbane. Differences for other cities ranged up to an excess of 5 $\frac{1}{4}$ d. in the £ in Bundaberg.

Miscellaneous items show the greatest range of variation between the cities, prices closest to the metropolitan being in Toowoomba, where the excess was 7½d. in the £, and the highest being in Townsville with an excess of 1s. 10¾d. No city had lower prices for miscellaneous items than Brisbane. The only marked change in relativity in the latest quarter was a rise of 1¾d. in the Townsville excess over Brisbane.

Commonwealth and State Basic Wage Rates.

Following the publication of the index numbers for the March quarter, 1953, the basic wage rates of the Commonwealth Court were automatically adjusted from 1st May, 1953. The index numbers, the new wage rates, and the amounts of the adjustments are shown in the next table. The latest basic wage rates for males and females declared by the various State industrial authorities, and the dates from which they operated, are also shown. The rate prescribed by the State Court in Brisbane was increased by 2s. Od. for adult males and 1s. 6d. for adult females. Commonwealth rates operated from the beginning of the first full pay period in May.

Retail Prices and Basic Wage Rates.

Australian Capital Cities.

Capital City.	Retail Price Index ("C" Series), 1st Quarter, 1953.	Commonwealth Basic Wage.			State Basic Wage.			Date of Operation.
		Males. a	Increase on Previous Rate.	Males.	Females.			
Brisbane	2,105	£ 10 s. 17 d. 0	s. 2 d. 0	£ 10 s. 18 d. 0	£ 7 s. 6 d. 0			4.5.53
Sydney	2,338	12 1 0	3 0	12 1 0	9 0 6			1.5.53
Melbourne	2,250	11 12 0	3 0	(11 12 0)	a			1.5.53 <sup>b</sup>
Adelaide	2,210	11 8 0	3 0	11 8 0	8 11 0			1.5.53
Perth	2,247	11 11 0	2 0	12 1 10	7 17 2			27.4.53
Hobart	2,317	11 19 0	7 0	(11 19 0)	a			1.5.53 <sup>b</sup>

<sup>a</sup> The female rates are 75 per cent. of the male rates.

<sup>b</sup> No State wage declared. The rate shown is that of the Commonwealth Court which is followed to a large extent.

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GOVERNMENT STATISTICIAN.

BRISBANE.

30th April, 1953.

Table No. 1 - The "All Items" Retail Prices Index - "C" Series.  
 (Base: Weighted Average of Six Capital Cities, 1923-1927 = 1,000.)

Table No. 2 - Food and Groceries Retail Prices Index.  
 (Base: Weighted Average of Six Capital Cities, 1923-1927 = 1,000.)

Table No. 3 - Clothing and Footwear Retail Prices Index.

(Base: Weighted Average of Six Capital Cities, 1923-1927 = 1,000.)

City.	Year Ended June, 1939.	Year Ended June, 1946.	Year Ended March, 1953.	Quarter Ended -				
				March, 1952.	June, 1952.	Sept., 1952.	Dec., 1952.	March, 1953.
Brisbane ..	..	829	1,454	3,056	2,923	3,002	3,049	3,083
Toowoomba ..	..	829	1,429	3,041	2,896	2,965	3,020	3,086
Rockhampton ..	..	845	1,477	3,085	2,961	3,027	3,070	3,128
Townsville ..	..	840	1,457	3,065	2,938	3,029	3,045	3,097
Bundaberg ..	..	839	1,447	3,108	2,965	3,027	3,102	3,152
Weighted Average								
Five Towns ..	..	831	1,454	3,059	2,926	3,004	3,050	3,093
Warwick ..	..	825	1,441	3,064	2,913	3,014	3,044	3,101